

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-20 NSC-07 PRS-01 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 USIA-15 PA-04

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ARA:WGBOWDLER (INFO)

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA CITY IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 045659

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS:PINT, GT

SUBJECT:PRESS GUIDANCE REGARDING GUATEMALAN ELECTIONS

1. DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN WILL MAKE FOLLOWING STATEMENT
IF, AS LIKELY, QUERIED ABOUT ELECTIONS DURING NOON
BRIEFING MARCH 7.

Q: WHAT ARE THE RESULTS IN THE GUATEMALAN ELECTION?

A: AS FAR AS I KNOW, NO WINNER HAS BEEN OFFICIALLY
ANNOUNCED AS YET.

Q: WHAT IS THE LATEST COUNT AND WHAT PERCENTAGE OF THE
EXPECTED VOTE DOES IT REPRESENT?

A: THE LATEST OFFICIAL RESULTS AVAILABLE TO US SHOW
LAUGERUD, THE COALITION CANDIDATE, LEADING WITH 203,482;
FOLLOWED BY RIOS, THE OPPOSITION CANDIDATE, WITH
181,234; AND PAIZ, THE REACTIONARY PARTY CANDIDATE,
WITH 102,883. I AM NOT SURE WHAT PERCENTAGE OF THE
TOTAL VOTE THESE RETURNS REPRESENT, BUT THE EXPECTED
VOTE WAS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF 750,000.

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Q: DO WE HAVE ANY EVIDENCE TO SUBSTANTIATE THE CHARGES
OF FRAUD?

A:

I UNDERSTANT THAT BOTH THE OFFICIAL COALITION AND THE
OPPOSITION HAVE MADE SOME ALLEGATIONS OF IRREGULARITIES.
OBVIOUSLY, THIS IS NOT A MATTER ON WHICH IT WOULD BE
APPROPRIATE FOR ME TO COMMENT.

Q: HAVE WE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE GOVERNMENT AND WITH
THE OPPOSITION PARTIES?

A: WE'RE ON GOOD TERMS WITH ALL THE CONTENDERS AND HAVE
MAINTAINED CONTACT WITH THEM.

Q: GUATEMALA HAS A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE. HAS THERE BEEN
ANY VIOLENCE THUS FAR, AND DO WE EXPECT ANY?

A: THE ELECTION SEEMED TO BE CONDUCTED IN AN ATMOSPHERE
OF GENERAL CALM AND OPENNESS. WE HAVE SEEN SOME PRESS
REPORTS OF SCATTERED INCIDENTS FOLLOWING THE BALLOTING.

Q: WHAT IS THE U.S. VIEW OF THE ELECTION?

A: THE POSITION OF THE U.S. ON THESE MATTERS IS CLEAR.

OUR PREFERENCE AND SUPPORT FOR DEMOCRATIC PROCEDURES
AND CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT IS WELL KNOWN.

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